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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SKOPJE 000613

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MK](#)

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: AMBASSADOR AND PRIME MINISTER ON NEXT  
STEPS FOR AVERTING FURTHER CAMPAIGN-RELATED INCIDENTS

REF: A. SKOPJE 594

[1](#)B. SKOPJE 596

Classified By: Poloff Katrina Mosser for reasons 1.5(b) and (d).

SUMMARY.

[1](#)1. (C) During a June 26 meeting, the Ambassador shared with PM Buckovski her concerns over recent campaign-related violent incidents, mostly involving supporters of ethnic Albanian rival parties DUI and DPA (refs A and B). She outlined steps the U.S. Embassy would take over the next several days to try to curb such incidents. Buckovski said he would reach out to Kosovar Albanian leaders and would ask them to urge both DUI and DPA leaders to restrain their supporters. He also suggested some confidence-building measures for DUI and DPA, including establishing a "hotline" for managing or averting incidents. Buckovski said DPA VP Thaci's goal is to use a show of force to compel other political leaders to offer DPA a place in the next government, regardless of which eAlbanian party wins the most seats. Buckovski vowed he would not accept such a tactic if governing SDSM received the next mandate. We will work to dissuade DPA leaders of the notion that they can use threats to force their way into the next government, and will support DUI's efforts to prevent its supporters from responding to additional DPA provocations. End Summary.

WAY FORWARD IN TRYING TO CURB CAMPAIGN-RELATED VIOLENT INCIDENTS

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador met with Prime Minister Buckovski on June 26 to discuss the way forward in trying to curb recent campaign-related violent incidents, most of them involving members of rival ethnic Albanian political parties DUI and DPA. The Ambassador said she was disappointed that the campaign-related violence had continued over the weekend in a clash between DUI and DPA supporters in the town of Rasce, outside of Skopje. She emphasized the importance of Buckovski showing he was engaged in finding solutions to the problem in his role as the Prime Minister. She told Buckovski that she, joined by the EUSR, OSCE head of mission, and UK ambassador, would visit Rasce on June 27 to make public statements condemning these incidents and reiterating their call for an immediate end to the

violence.

13. (C) The Ambassador also informed Buckovski that she would meet privately with DUI leader Ali Ahmeti and with DPA President Arben Xhaferi on June 28 to reiterate the urgent need to end the violence. If the incidents continued, she said, the embassy would be compelled to update the U.S. Consular Information Sheet to inform U.S. citizens of violence in the country. We also would work with the American-Macedonian Chamber of Commerce to have them release a statement on the damaging effect the incidents could have on investment and tourism here. In addition, the EU was considering expanding its visa ban list to include individuals implicated in the incidents, including party leaders.

#### KOSOVAR ALBANIAN CONNECTION COULD HELP CALM THE SITUATION

14. (C) Buckovski said he had spoken to Kosovo Prime Minister Ceku earlier in the day to stress the GOM's desire to have "European standard" election campaigns for the remainder of the campaign period. Ceku had told Buckovski he would release a statement emphasizing the importance of these elections for Macedonia, for eAlbanians, and for the future of Kosovo. Buckovski also said he would contact Hashim Thaci and Ramush Haradinaj to deliver the same message, and would ask them to press Xhaferi and Ahmeti to restrain their supporters.

15. (C) The Ambassador noted that we felt Ahmeti was, as he repeatedly has told us, resisting Kosovar Albanian offers to him of weapons and personnel to counter DPA's forces on the ground. It would be useful for Buckovski to talk to

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Haradinaj and to stress to him that such offers, if he had made or was considering making any, would be counterproductive. It also would help for Hashim Thaci to pass to DPA the message that they should refrain from further attempts to exploit the situation.

#### ETHNIC MACEDONIAN PARTIES TRYING TO EXPLOIT THE CLASHES

16. (C) Buckovski replied that VMRO-NP (right-of-center, nationalist) informal leader Ljupco Georgievski was trying to exploit the current situation by suggesting that there should be a separate election assessment of eAlbanians and eMacedonians. VMRO-DPMNE (main opposition party) had also entered the fray, suggesting in a newspaper they control that "DUI came to power by the gun and should leave by the gun", encouraging DPA to continue its pressure on DUI, including through violent tactics, to unseat them.

17. (C) Buckovski said he had appealed to all party leaders to instruct their supporters to use only verbal communication, not physical violence or intimidation, to convey campaign themes. According to police information he had received, at least half of DPA's presidency was responsible for provoking incidents. Although arrests at this time would have obvious political implications, the GOM was prepared to enforce the rule of law. The MOI would arrest those responsible for the violence if necessary. (COMMENT: We do not expect such arrests now as court cases would be impossible to make given the likely lack of people to testify, and because of the ongoing election campaign. END COMMENT.)

#### CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES BETWEEN DUI AND DPA

18. (C) Citing the informal contacts with the VMRO-DPMNE campaign HQs that governing SDSM has developed to help manage or avert incidents, Buckovski suggested the same would be useful for DUI and DPA. (NOTE: Buckovski failed to note that the existing informal contacts had not prevented a violent clash between SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE supporters in downtown Skopje the previous week.) It would be good if

Xhaferi and Ahmeti could agree to establish a "hotline" or other mechanism for reporting incidents, and could use that mechanism to coordinate to de-conflict their campaign schedule. That would help prevent groups from both parties en route to campaign events from crossing paths and clashing.

DPA's END GAME -- A PLACE IN GOVERNMENT AT ALL COSTS

¶9. (C) Buckovski said his assessment was that DPA Vice President Thaci wanted to present an overwhelming show of force during the campaign to frighten the political establishment into inviting him into a coalition, even if DPA did not emerge from the elections as the eAlbanian party with the most seats. He wanted to send a signal that it would be disastrous and destabilizing if DUI won and DPA was not included in government. DPA intended to "destroy the elections" if it did not find a place in the next government.

¶10. (C) Buckovski said that, if SDSM won another mandate, he would only offer to govern with the eAlbanian party that had conducted a peaceful campaign, even if that party had not won the most seats among the eAlbanian parties. VMRO-DPMNE should be asked to adopt a similar position, he concluded.

COMMENT

¶11. (C) By all accounts, it looks like DPA is trying to keep campaign-related violent incidents running to impress voters with a show of force. If Buckovski is correct in his assessment that DPA's Thaci also is trying to leverage that show of force into a "guarantee" that DPA will have a place in the next government, we will work quickly to dissuade the DPA leadership of that notion. In addition, we will work with Ahmeti to assure him of our support if he restrains his supporters from countering DPA provocations

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with DUI reprisals. At this time, however, allegations from both sides are continuing and, according to the Minister of Interior, more possibly violent exchanges are likely if rival party members cross paths.

MILOVANOVIC